

VZCZCXYZ0014
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #0847/01 3251526
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 211526Z NOV 05
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9831
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 6364
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 6758
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0030
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ NOV LIMA 2907
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1176
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 8522
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 3445
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 3335
RHEHOND/DIRONDCP WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 010847

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/11/2015
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: DRUG CZAR WALTERS MEETING WITH MOD OSPINA AND
CUPOLA

Classified By: Charge Milton K. Drucker, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) November 10, 2005, 8:00-9:00, Ministry of Defense,
Bogota

¶2. (U) Participants:

U.S.

John P. Walters, Director ONDCP
Patrick Ward, ONDCP A/D
Richard O'Connor, ONDCP
Julie Connor, Narcotics Affairs Section Director
Col. Kevin Saderup, MilGroup Commander
Col. Brian Butcher, Defense Attache
Paul Mahlstedt, Narcotics Affairs
Alberto Rodriguez, Narcotics Affairs Officer
Dana Brown, Notetaker
Nohemy Kattan, Interpreter

Colombia

Camilo Ospina Bernal, Minister of Defense
Gen. Carlos Ospina, Commanding General of the Armed Forces
Gen. Freddy Padilla, Chief Joint Staff
Gen. Edgar Lesmez, Commander of Air Force
Gen. Mauricio Soto, Commander of Navy
Gen. Reinaldo Castellanos, Commander of the Army
BGen. Jorge Baron, Director Antinarcotics Police (DIRAN)
Mr. Julian Ponton, Director of International Relations

Summary

¶3. (C) Defense Minister Camilo Ospina and his military cupola briefed the Office of National Drug Control Director John Walters on priority areas of bilateral cooperation on counter-narcotics efforts: increasing flexibility with interdiction, eradication, and Air Bridge Denial operations; augmenting resources, especially for Narino and Cauca Departments; and strengthening international law enforcement cooperation on narcotics criminals. Walters agreed that flexibility and cooperation were necessary to

counter-narcotics successes. He stressed, however, that U.S. resources were finite and that Colombia had to prioritize and coordinate its operations. End summary.

Prioritizing Scarce CN Resources

14. (C) Minister Camilo Ospina reported that counter-narcotics eradication had surpassed 2005 goals, but stressed that further resources would be necessary to allow for success in long-term drug eradication efforts. Ospina and Army General Castellanos noted that three aerial spray packages were not enough; a fourth package would allow permanent coverage in different cultivation areas without allowing cultivators any recovery time (as they have now). Ospina raised concerns about the increasing narcotics cultivation in Narino and Cauca Departments in southwest Colombia. The MOD also expressed concern that the third spray package (T-65s) was not flying and asked that it resume its mission. Admiral Soto requested U.S. assistance in providing a fuel supply for remote areas in those departments to allow the military to refuel locally rather than having to depend on distant supplies. He also cited the need for a base in Tumaco from which to launch operations on the Pacific coast, and for two maritime patrol aircraft.

15. (C) ONDCP Director Walters recognized Ospina's concerns, but underscored the limits to U.S. resource availability, especially given commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan. While he noted that the GOC would receive slightly more assistance in 2006 than this year, he recommended the GOC identify vital resource needs and focus assistance requests on items primarily available in the United States. For example, he

suggested that the Colombian military resolve fuel supply issues while the United States focused on airframes to counter Narino's growing cultivation. Such a resource division would allow more efficient coverage overall, according to Walters. He also mentioned the possibility of ONDCP establishing an asset sharing agreement with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Walters said he had asked the Deputy Secretary of DHS to lend assets for maritime patrol when the United States was on lower terrorist alert status. He encouraged Colombia to seek similar cross-agency cooperation.

Air Bridge Denial and Transit Nations' Resources

16. (C) Air Force Commander General Lesmez praised the Air Bridge Denial (ABD) program overall, but voiced concerns about the legal limitations placed on pilots and the balance between source- and transit-nation counter-narcotics efforts.

He said the 12-mile limit imposed on the Citation Tracker aircraft made it difficult for the Colombian Air Force to respond or even identify targets. He requested that the limit be extended from 12 miles to 80 to allow for proper identification of narcotics trafficking aircraft. Lesmez reaffirmed Colombia's commitment to safe ABD operations to avoid tragic errors, but underscored the need for greater leeway. He also recommended that, in general, the United States consider shifting counter-narcotics resources currently used in transit nations towards narcotics source nations to improve interdiction. He also asked for an increase in the number of flight hours financed through the ABD program.

17. (C) Director Walters offered to review the possibility of extending the ABD's protocol limits. He also stated that the USG had already reduced resources assigned to the transit zone and had focused remaining resources on targeted operations. He encouraged Colombia to do the same by using resources in coordinated, intelligence-driven operations rather than attempting to cover all narcotics cultivation and transportation areas simultaneously.

Spraying in National Parks

¶18. (C) MOD Ospina said the relevant GOC offices met to discuss the issue of spraying in the national parks after Walters' meeting the day before with President Uribe. GOC officials decided to move forward with eradication in La Macarena National Park and planned to move military forces in to secure it for manual eradication. If General Castellanos decides it is not possible to eradicate manually, the GOC will authorize aerial spraying.

Multiple Targets Require Flexibility

¶19. (C) MOD Ospina told Walters that the drug kingpins were not only the simple "drug mobsters" but also the narcoterrorists who cloak their work in political justifications. He reported the GOC's efforts to go after both kinds of narcotics traffickers and to eliminate leaders. He said the GOC needed resources, flexibility, and information to be able to capture or kill such drug chiefs.

¶10. (U) Walters acknowledged the need for greater flexibility and thanked MOD Ospina for the military and police actions against narcotics in Colombia. He offered to investigate the status of urgent equipment requests that were delayed in the U.S. foreign military sales process. He further mentioned that he would be willing to request that the British government encourage Venezuela to cooperate with Colombian counter-narcotics counterparts. Despite U.S. resource limitations, Walters confirmed the USG was willing to assist Colombia in its efforts to help do more with less on counter-narcotics issues.

¶11. (U) This message was cleared by ONDCP.
DRUCKER